

Dawn Huntley

From: Courtney Sowa <noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 10:53 AM
To: House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
Subject: Yes to Townhomes and Mixed-use Zones

The Honorable Stephen Casey,

March 11, 2025

The Honorable Stephen M. Casey
Chair, House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Yes on Townhomes and Oversized Lot Splits (H5798 and H5799)

Dear Chairman Casey and Members of the House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing:

I am writing in support of two important housing bills, HB5798 that allows for more single-family townhomes to be built and HB5799 which allows oversized lots to be subdivided to match the surrounding housing.

According to 2025 YouGov polling data, 78% of Rhode Island residents believe that their community has too few homes that are affordable to buy or rent.

I've chosen to plant roots in Rhode Island over my own home town because of all the beauty and character in its communities, but that may not be possible if there are not enough homes to make it affordable to stay. I am a public servant in a middle class household with ordinary dreams of parenthood and dignified retirement. These should be mile markers, not dreams. I urge you to pass policy supporting new construction at every level such as those you will discuss tonight.

H5798 will make it easier for families to buy a starter home, and seniors to downsize in their community, by legalizing townhomes in all two-family zoning districts. Townhomes offer a

more affordable path to homeownership without the complication of condominium documents, plus are significantly easier for builders to finance.

H5799 will empower property owners who own a double lot to make their own decision about whether to split the lot in two, creating new homebuilding opportunities while still requiring the resulting parcels to resemble the surrounding neighborhood. This measure will be particularly helpful seniors who are "land rich but cash poor," helping them to age in place.

I want to thank the bill sponsors, Rep. June Speakman, and Rep. Cherie Cruz, for their dedication to addressing the housing crisis in Rhode Island, and I respectfully ask the Committee to vote in support of these two important changes to zoning laws that will help create much needed housing in Rhode Island.

Respectfully,

Courtney Sowa
Providence

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